Backgrounder

BP-122E

CHILD CARE SERVICES IN CANADA

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7 March 1985

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© Minister of Supply and Services Canada 1989
Cat. No. YM32-2-122E
ISBN 0-660-12413-0

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PUBLIÉ EN FRANÇAIS

91-01757/

CANADA

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CHILD CARE SERVICES IN CANADA

INTRODUCTION

Arguments for increasing the funding and availability of child care facilities are usually based on the rising proportions of working mothers with young children. However, in the history of the development of child care in North America, the mother's employment needs were not considered to be the most important factor in the provision of child care services. An enriched childrearing method was the rationale behind the nursery school movement. The provision of welfare services for poor families and the prevention of delinquency were the motives behind the development of day nurseries. These two distinct historical origins of modern day care centres can shed some light on the present-day controversies about day care in Canada and the United States.

After examining the history of the development of child care facilities in Canada and the United States, the present concerns will be analysed. Social science research on the need for such facilities, patterns of day care use, the effects of day care on children and day care in other countries will be presented with a focus on the role of the federal government in the development and expansion of child care services.

EARLY CHILD CARE IN CANADA

The daytime care of children became a social issue in the 19th century urban setting when the number of "neglected" and delinquent children began to noticeably increase. Poor, deserted and widowed women were often unable to support their young children. This sometimes meant that children would be temporarily placed in institutions or children's

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homes, cared for by relatives or friends, or left to fend for themselves while their mother worked as a domestic or a factory worker. Since middle-class women seldom worked outside the home (unless they were widowed or in serious financial need), the care of children of working mothers was generally seen as a welfare issue. Orphanages, foundling homes and other children's homes were run by churches or charitable organizations and provided care for infants and children not cared for by their families. These institutions were financed through donations and volunteer labour, and the children, when possible, worked for their board. Children were also placed with families by means of indenture and were expected to work for that family in return for their care.

The institutionalization of neglected and delinquent children declined considerably in Toronto after a conference held in Washington D.C. made it clear that these children benefitted from a family environment. The Toronto Children's Aid Society, which had been established in 1891 began to place children in foster homes wherever possible and children's institutions fell into disuse after 1920. Settlement houses or community welfare centres provided some daytime care for welfare children, as well as programs to improve the health, morals, and the education of the poor.

In the welfare tradition, one controversy has always been whether to provide child care to enable poor women to work for a living or whether to pay a mother welfare benefits to enable her to stay at home to care for her children. Without federal or provincial support for social services, few municipalities or charitable organizations could pay a mother to look after her own children. When mothers were forced to take work to support themselves and their children, they usually made private arrangements with neighbours or relatives for childcare. It was not until 1916 that a Canadian province (Manitoba) initiated mothers' allowances, and these were only for "morally upright women" with dependant children.(1) Federal universal mothers' allowances were introduced in 1945.

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(1) Andrew Armitage, Social Welfare in Canada, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1975, p. 214.

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Churches and settlement houses also provided some child care for "neglected" children, but this was not a service for working mothers but rather "charity". Children of the poor were minded by wealthier women who volunteered their time in an attempt to curb future delinquency and promote Christian values.

Public kindergartens or nursery schools arose out of a somewhat different tradition: the idea imported from Germany that children would benefit from professional direction in their play, guidance in their preschool learning, and social interaction with other children in their early years. Child psychologists from Europe encouraged conscientious parents to provide their preschool children with disciplined but creative play in a group setting. The first public school kindergarten opened in Ontario in 1883,(1) but it was not until the 1920s that they were widely developed in Canada.

After World War I, birth rates were declining but rates of infant mortality and maternal death were still high in Canada compared to some European countries. Concern was expressed by doctors, journalists, members of the clergy and social work officials that mothers themselves were promoting child health problems by their lack of knowledge of child care. During the 1920s and 1930s, strong criticism of the knowledge and expertise of mothers was expressed in magazines such as Canadian Home Journal and Maclean's. Concern was voiced that the worldly ambitions of the "new woman" (i.e. the desire for education and paid work) would lead to a deterioration of family life.(2)

In 1922, the federal government's new Division of Child Welfare produced a series of booklets providing practical childrearing and domestic advice and set up clinics for expectant mothers and babies as part of the campaign to reduce infant mortality. Popular magazines published a

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(1) Neil Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus, University of Toronto Press, 1976, p. 174.

(2) Veronica Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery: Childcare Professionals Reshape the Years One to Five, 1920-1940", in Childhood and Family in Canadian History, edited by Joy Parr, McClelland and Stewart, 1982, p. 161.

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barrage of articles celebrating maternalism and recommending strict scheduling in infant and child care.

It is out of this tradition that nursery schools developed and expanded in Canada. In 1925, nursery schools were started for children two to five years old as part of the child study program of McGill University and the University of Toronto.(1) All of the children were from middle-class families and had educated parents. They attended an enriched program of creative play and "scientific child care", grounded in behaviourist and Freudian psychology. Mothers occasionally assisted the professionally trained teachers, but were not gainfully employed themselves.

Although the McGill nursery experiment lasted only until 1930, the University of Toronto program continued and became the model for settlement house and church nurseries. However, there was always a certain amount of opposition to the nursery school idea. From the 1930s to the 1950s, research on early childhood development emphasized the importance of the bond between mother and child. Some feared that nursery school or day nursery children would be deprived of that bond and consequently develop abnormally.

Studies done in European orphanages showed that institutionalized infants and children often became mentally dull and emotionally disturbed over time. The results were interpreted as resulting from "maternal deprivation". However, these researchers (i.e. John Bowlby, Rene Spitz) mistakenly confused the presence of the mother with nurturance, stability and intellectual stimulation and suggested that mothers who "neglected" their children all day (i.e. had them cared for by someone else) were voluntarily causing emotional and intellectual problems for them. No one studied the absence of the father in early childhood development, assuming that only the mother could provide the nurturance a child needed. And no one seemed to realize that a sample of emotionally disturbed children in an orphanage for 24 hours a day was different from eight to nine hours in a professionally-run nursery with normal children.

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(1) Strong-Boag, p. 167.

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The other reason why nursery schools did not become more popular was the idea that the married woman's "career" was motherhood. If she was not caring for her children, she was not fulfilling her duty. This was partly perpetuated by Freudian psychology which was quite popular in North America in the 1930s and 1940s. Some thought that nursery schools would encourage married women to work for pay outside the home and compete with the male breadwinner. This might lead to the dissolution of the family.

Despite this attitude against married women working, women's labour was needed during World War II in war industries and in many other positions left vacant by men who had joined the armed forces. The National Selective Service and the federal Department of Labour began a recruitment campaign in March 1942 which at first was directed to single women but later included married women as well. As part of his ten-point plan for drawing women into industry, Prime Minister Mackenzie King revised the Income Tax Act in July 1942 to allow husbands to claim their working wives as dependents regardless of how much money the wives earned. Prior to this revision, the amount was $750 after which a husband lost his tax exemption. In 1946, the Income Tax Regulations were changed back and the amount a wife could earn was reduced to $250.(1)

The Prime Minister also announced in 1942 that nurseries would be provided for women in "war industries" a term which was later broadly defined. By 1942, there were already a number of day nurseries in Ontario. These were run by churches and other charitable organizations, but the numbers were inadequate to meet even prewar needs. Public pressure for government provision of nurseries and after-school supervision was strong in 1942 when concern was mounting over "latchkey" children and the possible connections between maternal employment and the rising rate of juvenile delinquency. In the summer of 1942, Ontario and Quebec signed a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government for capital and operating costs for day nurseries, but the initiative of establishing them was left to

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(1) Ruth Pierson, "Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women into the Canadian Labour Force in World War II", Historical Papers, Canadian Historical Association, 1976, pp. 153-154.

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the provinces. Other provinces did not make use of the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement.

The first nursery to operate under the agreement was in October 1942 in Toronto. Although at first only mothers working in "war industries" could use these centres, spaces were made available for other working mothers in 1944. Welfare officials and women's groups argued that all working women were helping the war effort by keeping industry running and therefore they should benefit from this service. However, there was a 25 % quota on spaces for the children of mothers not in war industries.

By September 1945, there were 28 nurseries in Ontario accommodating 900 children in churches, schools and settlement houses. The Wartime Day Care Programme for School Children further accommodated approximately 2,500 children, providing supervision during vacation periods, a hot meal at lunch during the school year, and after-school care. Most of the nurseries and programs for school-aged children were in Toronto.(1)

In Quebec the child care programme was slower getting off the ground, and the first nursery opened in March 1943. As of September 1945 there were only five nurseries operating in Quebec, all in Montreal, accommodating about 120 children. There was no day care programme for school-aged children in that province. In Quebec more than Ontario, day nurseries were seen as a war emergency and were closed in October 1945, despite appeals by the Montreal Council of Social Agencies, the Welfare Federation, the Federation of Catholic Charities and the Montreal Association of Protestant Women Teachers.(2)

In Ontario where there were more wartime child care facilities and stronger pressure to keep them open after the war, federal funding continued until April 1946. The Ontario Day Nurseries Act of that year authorized municipalities to provide day care with provincial cost-sharing and some wartime nurseries were continued. But the programme for school-aged children was dropped. By November 1946, only 19 nurseries remained.

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(1) Pierson, p. 157.

(2) Pierson, pp. 157, 160.

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Investigations of mothers using wartime child care facilities indicated that despite the fact that the government campaign urged women to join the labour force for "patriotic" reasons, the vast majority of women were actually working for financial reasons. Some were widows, deserted wives or unmarried mothers. Others were helping husbands work off debits. Yet the federal government's involvement in day care failed to acknowledge this reason for working and funded child care only as a temporary crisis measure. The postwar withdrawal of funding and amendments to the Income Tax Act were both in keeping with the official attitudes towards working women which prevailed at that time. Women were seen as a labour reserve to be tapped in emergencies only. Otherwise women's place was in the home.(1)

It was not until 1966 that federal funding was used again explicitly for day care. The Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) extended cost-sharing to welfare programs which enabled the provision of day care for the children of welfare recipients or those below the poverty line. Day care for ordinary families was paid for by parents and subsidies from local governments.

CHILD CARE IN UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL VIEW

The first infant school in the United States was started in Pennsylvania in the 1830s and was modelled after a famous Swiss nursery. However this American school was seen as a Utopian experiment and had few imitators. The next nursery in the U.S. was established in New York City in 1854 for the children of poor Civil War Widows. Later ones were built in New York City in 1872 and 1887 for the children of working class immigrant mothers who worked in factories or as domestics.(2) Staffed by wealthy women who volunteered their time, these centres provided custodial care, discipline and some moral training. While day nurseries or day care centres

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(1) Pierson, p. 164.

(2) Rosalyn F. Bazandall, "Who Shall Care for Our Children? The History and Development of Day Care in the United States" in Women: a Feminist Perspective, edited by Jo Freeman, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1979, p. 135.

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arose out of the welfare tradition by providing care and protection for neglected or disadvantaged children, the kindergarten or nursery school movement began in the United States as early as 1848.(1) Unlike day care centres, kindergartens and nursery schools developed from a European educational philosophy that preschool children benefitted from creative play and professional direction. These schools catered to children of the well-to-do and parents paid high tuition and incidental fees for an enriched environment for their preschoolers. The nursery schools were staffed by professionals and later partially absorbed by the school system. But the custodial centres for poorer children had less professional assistance, sporadic funding and lower standards of health and safety.

In 1896, the National Federation of Day Nurseries was established to work for higher standards and by 1905 American physicians began to inspect day care facilities and to examine children.(2) Social agencies operated these centres and during the 1930s expanded the number of nurseries to assist the increasing numbers of poor families with child care, nutrition and health care.

Day care facilities were not funded by the federal government in the United States until 1933 when the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (F.E.R.A.), later known as Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.), was set up.(3) This program was designed to create employment for unemployed teachers, nutritionists, clerical workers, cooks and janitors by employing them in day care centres for welfare children. It was also expected to enable welfare mothers to find work or train for new jobs while someone else cared for their children. Group care was offered for children 2 to 5 years old and the nurseries, in schools, churches and settlement houses, were open 6 days a week, 10 to 12 hours a day. By 1937, 40,000 American children were provided with high standard day care and education.(4) However this program was seen as temporary by the government and lasted only five years.

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(1) Ibid., p. 136.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Sara Pope Cooper, "History of the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements" in Policy Issues in Day Care: Summaries of 21 Papers, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1977, p. 10.

(4) Baxandall, p. 137.

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In October 1942, the federal government notified the W.P.A. that day nurseries were no longer needed as a source of employment. Funding was cut for welfare children. But in 1941, the Lanham Act had made federal funds available to the states on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis for the expansion of day care centres and nursery schools in "defense areas". Only the children of mothers working in war industries could take advantage of federal funding for day care. The Children's Bureau was responsible for day care centres whereas the U.S. Office of Education was responsible for nursery schools.

The Children's Bureau was quite ambivalent about the idea of mothers working outside the home. They felt that in the long run, mother's absence was destructive to the family and to American values.(1) Concern was expressed by social work leaders that publicly-funded nurseries might sanction employment by women. By July 1945, about 1,600,000 American children were receiving care financed largely by federal government funds. But after the war when funds were withdrawn, most of the nurseries had to close (except in California where there was a continued demand for women working in the electronic and aircraft industry, and in New York City where groups of parents, professionals and union representatives petitioned to retain day care facilities after the withdrawal of WPA nursery funds in 1942).

In 1962, for the first time in the United States, day care was included in a federal program not part of an emergency or wartime measure. Public welfare amendments to the Social Security Act allowed for the funding of day care as a rehabilitative social service. Funds were allotted to the states on a matching basis, and it was up to each state to decide whether and/or how to launch or extend day care programs. This meant that services fluctuated considerably in different states.

The Equal Opportunity Act in 1964 was a major step in the history of American day care. From it came Project Headstart designed to provide preschool education for poor "deprived" children. Based on research findings that children from poorer families entered the school system with a

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(1) Baxandall, p. 138.

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cultural and educational disadvantage from which they never recovered, Project Headstart provided an enriched day care program much like the nursery schools for children from upper- and middle-class families. However, during the 1970s, funding was cut for many social programs. For example, 49 centres were closed in New York City in 1976, although there were 8,000 children on a waiting list for day care.(1)

In United States as in Canada, public day care was stigmatized by its welfare origins. Ideas about the importance of mothers staying home with their children led to a popular view that day care was only for disadvantaged children whose mothers "had to" work. While some nursery schools were available for wealthier families, they were not widely used by middle-class parents because of their high fees, their unavailability to most families, and because child care professionals emphasized the importance of maternal child care at home for the emotionally healthy child.

In both Canada and the United States, federal funding for day care was provided as a service to working mothers only when it was felt to be a national emergency. After the 1960s, when federal funding was made available once again, it was designated for those in financial need rather than all families.

EXPANDING NEED FOR DAY CARE

In the last 30 years, the need for child care outside the family has increased with more single-parent families and the financial need for more mothers of young children to work. With the expansion of the service sector of the labour force during the 1960s, new recruits were needed for the labour force. Inflation and higher costs of raising a family required two incomes to afford the standards of living couples were encouraged to have. More effective birth control, higher education for women and a liberation ideology enabled more women to break from tradition

(1) Ibid., p. 139.

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and work for pay when their children were young. The development of part-time work also made it possible for many women to fulfill their domestic responsibilities and work for pay at the same time. While only 4.5 % of married women were in the labour force in 1941,(1) this figure had increased to 51 % by 1981.(2)

The failure of the government and community to provide child care services has not seriously discouraged women's labour force participation. Informal and temporary child care has been used by most working families, relying on relatives, neighbours, friends and strangers. Wealthier families have brought nannies and "au pair" girls from Europe. But several problems exist with these ad hoc arrangements. For one thing, professional care is not always possible to find and concerns about the quality of babysitting services have led many parents to prefer professional child care centres. The reliability of non-professional child care is sometimes a problem. Both of the issues of quality and reliability are affected by the fact that babysitting is very poorly paid work and sought by few educated Canadians. Immigrant women who are often available as babysitters are not always fluent in English or French and may have different ideas than the parents about childrearing. The proportions of teenagers in the population, who often babysat their own younger siblings or neighbourhood children, are steadily declining. Other female relatives and neighbours who were formerly available to babysit are now seeking paid work in the labour force, which is leading to a shortage of informal child care. These factors have led to an increasing demand for formal child care staffed by professionals and regulated by the government.

The need for day care is also evident from the increasing proportion of single mothers who receive little or no support from the child's father. Over the last few decades the rate of divorce in Canada has

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(1) Pat and Hugh Armstrong, The Double Ghetto, McClelland and Stewart, 1978, p. 152.

(2) Statistics Canada, Labour Force Information, Catalogue 71-001 P, September 1984, p. 12.

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skyrocketted from 54.8 per 100,000 population in 1968 to 285.9 in 1982.(1) The proportion of divorces involving dependent children has fluctuated over the years from 56 % in 1972 to 53 % in 1982.(2) Because child support laws are seldom enforced, over two thirds of non-custodial parents do not pay the support payments ordered by the court one year after the settlement was reached.(3) Since 83 % of the children of divorcing parents live with their mothers,(4) this means that separated or divorced mothers must work to pay their expenses or go on welfare. If they work for pay, they require some form of day care.

Not only are more married women entering the labour force but they are now less able to move in and out of the job market for childrearing purposes than 20 years ago. With unemployment high and the need for income increasing, many women can no longer afford to leave the labour market to bear and raise their children unless they have some guarantee of maintaining their job and seniority. Consequently, more mothers of pre-school children remain in the labour force than previously. In 1975, 562,000 children under six years old had mothers in the labour force. In 1982, this figure rose to 950,000.(5)

The development of day care services in Canada has not been consistent with the expanding need. During the early 70s, day care experienced a remarkable growth. In 1973 there were 28,300 centre and family care spaces but by 1976 this had jumped to 83,000. In subsequent years the expansion slowed but expanded again after 1979. In 1983, there were 139,000 spaces in licensed centres (non-profit, commercial, government-operated and home-care).(6) However, it has been estimated by Health

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(1) Statistics Canada, Marriages and Divorces, Vital Statistics, Vol. II, 1982, Cat. 84-205, Table 10, p. 16, Ottawa 1983.

(2) Anne-Marie Ambert, Divorce in Canada, Academic Press, Toronto 1980, p. 39; Statistics Canada, 1983, p. 26.

(3) Mildred Morton, "Divorce, Custody, Support, Enforcement: Transferring and Sharing Jurisdiction", Library of Parliament Research Branch, C.I.R. 81-13E, p. 1.

(4) Statistics Canada, 1983, calculated from Table 15, p. 24.

(5) Johnson, L. & N. McCormick, Day Care in Canada: a background paper C.A.C.S.W., Ottawa 1984.

(6) D. Lipovenko, "Day care spaces for infants steadily declining, study says", Globe and Mail, Nov. 29, 1984.

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and Welfare Canada that there are over 800,000 children under the age of six who are not accommodated by the available day care spaces despite the need for care.(1)

PATTERNS OF DAY CARE USE IN CANADA

In Canada, most working parents who require child care use informal services such as babysitters. Because sitters are usually cheaper, closer to home or able to come to the child's house, and because day care space is simply unavailable in many regions, about 88 % of working mothers' children under six are cared for in informal arrangements. However, lack of supervision or regulation means that informal care may be very good or very bad. Often parents are unaware of abuses until after they happen. An unstimulating environment, a neglectful sitter or even child abuse is difficult to detect especially if the child is an infant.

Formal child care usually means either a day care centre or family day care which are both licensed and protected by provincial government regulations. Day care centres can be publicly funded, private non-profit or commercial establishments and vary considerably in quality. Provincial regulations govern the physical facilities, the staff-child ratios, hygiene, and standards of administration. Many centres accept children after the age of two when they are toilet-trained, but 7 % of spaces in non-profit or commercial establishments are allocated to children under two.(2) A recent report by Health and Welfare Canada(3) showed that the number of spaces allocated to infants has been declining in recent years, largely because of the higher costs of infant care.

About 54 % of day care centres are operated by non-profit groups. These may be community boards, parent co-operatives, voluntary associations or colleges. About 40 % of day care centres in Canada are

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(1) L. Johnson & N. McCormick, Day Care in Canada, p. 20.

(2) D. Lipovenko, "Day care spaces for infants steadily declining, study says", Globe and Mail, Nov. 29, 1984.

(3) The Status of Day Care in Canada (1983), reported by Lipovenko.

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commercial establishments(1) operating for a profit, but this figure is much higher in some provinces. Commercial centres may be chains which operate throughout North America (i.e. "Kinder-Care"). These are most heavily concentrated in Alberta and Ontario.

Only about 6 % of day care centres in Canada are run by municipal governments. Since 1976, there has been a decline in the proportion of public centres, a rise in non-profit establishments and a slight decline in the proportion of commercial day care centres. (See Table 1).

Table 1: Sponsorship of Day Care Centre Spaces in Canada

	Type of Sponsorship		
	Public	Non-Profit	Commercial
1976	12.64 %	43.99 %	43.36 %
1978	13.61	42.92	43.47
1980	8.65	51.13	40.22
1982	5.51	54.44	40.05
1983	5.51	54.15	40.34

Source: Canada, Health and Welfare, Status of Day Care in Canada, Ottawa, 1983, p. 8.

Family day care involves a licensed family home in which several unrelated children are cared for by someone who usually has preschool children of her own. The homes are selected and supervised by child care workers and sometimes are affiliated with day care centres.

(1) Susan Shaw, Better Care for Canadians: Options for Parents and Children), Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Ottawa 1982, p. 7. (BrV HV861C2A38)

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In most provinces, family day care is licensed and up to five unrelated children are cared for in each home. However, a shortage of municipal and provincial supervisors means that standards are not always enforced and many homes operate without licences.

Although the demand for licensed day care has increased considerably from 1975 to 1982, the percentage of children under six years old of working mothers with access to licensed care has increased marginally from 11.49 % to 11.63 %.(1) The percentage of children under 2 years old with access to licensed day care has fluctuated from 5.73 in 1978, to 3.80 % in 1980 to 5.01 % in 1982.(2) This means that most children are cared for informally.

The quality of unregulated private arrangements is generally unknown but there is probably considerable variation. However, the children who are worst off are the estimated 3 % of preschool children who are left to fend for themselves when their parents go to work presumably because day care is either unavailable or too expensive.(3)

THE COST OF DAY CARE

The money to support child care services comes from parents, the provincial government and the federal government. In Canada, about 49 % of licensed day care spaces are subsidized by governments. However the provinces vary considerably in the number and percentage of subsidized spaces. (See Table 2). Government funding comes from the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) which was amended in 1972 to include the operating costs of day care as well as staff-related costs which were formerly funded. Under the new CAP guidelines of 1982, the federal government shares day care costs with the provinces on a 50/50 basis only for those families considered to be in financial need.(4) Partial subsidies are available for those above

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(1) Johnson and McCormick, p. 20.

(2) Ibid., p. 21.

(3) Laura C. Johnson and Janice Dineen, The Kin Trade: the Day Care Crisis in Canada, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1981, p. 7.

(4) Now federally determined as in O.A.S./G.I.S. programs, rather than provincially established poverty levels.

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Table 2: Number and Percentage of Available Day Care Spaces Subsidized by Province, 1982

	Number of Subsidized Spaces	Percentage Subsidized
British Columbia	7,409	73 %
Alberta	6,710	36 %
Saskatchewan	2,910	75 %
Manitoba	3,100	49 %
Ontario	20,500	47 %
Quebec	11,613	49 %
New Brunswick	569	24 %
Nova Scotia	1,860	47 %
Prince Edward Island	200	43 %
Newfoundland	118	22 %
Canada	54,989	49 %

Source: Johnson and McCormick, p. 52, 53.

this income cut-off but who have very large families or who are single parents. For families not considered to be "in need" the full cost of day care must be paid by the family (unless the provincial or municipal government adds its own subsidy). Manitoba and Quebec have introduced maintenance grants for day care centres in an attempt to keep the service affordable. Other provinces have attempted to restrain rising costs by setting ceilings on parents' day care fees or by limiting the maximum subsidy to be paid on behalf of income-eligible parents. If day care costs rise above the maximum allowable subsidy, parents must pay the additional costs regardless of their financial ability.(1) Subsidized spaces for low-income families are

(1) Johnson and McCormick, p. 51.

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available only in provincially licensed and approved day care centres or family care homes. Some provinces provide subsidies for parents using commercial facilities (Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland), but others subsidize only non-profit care.(1)

The new CAP guidelines raise the income at which families can have their child care fees subsidized. Under the old guidelines, provincial poverty lines were used which led to considerable disparity among provinces. This new approach should equalize the cost of day care across the country. However, because the published studies are based on 1982 or earlier figures, discrepancies still appear in these reports. In 1985, the average weekly cost of day care in Ontario was about $80 per child in January,(2) but this cost can fluctuate by location and centre.

The federal government has allowed parents to deduct a portion of their child care expenses from their income tax since 1972. Working parents may claim $2000 per child per year to a maximum of $8000. This deduction must be claimed by the parent with the lower income. Receipts must be produced in claiming this deduction. In 1981, only 5.7 % of female tax filers made use of the child care expenses deduction, either because they did not have the expenses, did not know about the deduction or could not produce the necessary receipts. Many babysitters do not issue receipts as they are part of the "underground economy" where income is unrecorded.

In 1978, a refundable tax credit was introduced by the federal government for the parent who receives family allowances (usually the mother). This tax measure provides the greatest benefit to lower income earners who pay lower taxes, while the child care deduction is most beneficial for those who pay higher taxes and are more likely to be able to afford to pay their own day care expenses.(3)

One reason why day care is as cheap as it is relates to the qualifications and salaries of most day care workers in Canada and the U.S.

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(1) Shaw, p. 11-12.

(2) D. Lipovenko, "MPPs call on Ontario to spend more money on day care", Globe and Mail, Jan. 17, 1985, p. 20.

(3) Johnson and McCormick, p. 57.

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Their salaries are among the lowest in both countries. Most child care workers are women. Wages paid to day care workers vary across Canada and by sponsorship of the centre. Some provinces require a college diploma in Early Childhood Education, but other provinces have no specific qualifications. While those who work in day care centres might earn the minimum wage, family day care workers received between $7 and $12 per child per day in 1983. This indicates the low value placed on this work compared to other jobs.

DAY CARE IN OTHER COUNTRIES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In the United States and Europe, similar trends have been occurring in the structure of the family as in Canada. The two-earner family has necessitated more child care outside the home by non-family members. Child care policies and funding vary depending on the country's socio-political values and financial constraints from very heavy intervention to laissez-faire.(1) In Sweden, centre and family day care for children aged 0 to 5 is heavily subsidized by the central government, and the government sets operating guidelines, staff/child ratios and training requirements. There are no day care centres provided by private enterprise.

Child care in France is almost entirely sponsored by the government with some voluntary services. Since the 1950s, France has had free public universal nursery schools called "écoles maternelles". These schools have primarily an education function and cover over 90 % of children aged 3 to 6 and 30 % of children under three.(2) Funding is divided between the central and local government. Day care centres, family day care and child-minders are also the responsibility of the government, under the Ministry of Public Health and Social Security. Federal money is used mainly for construction (80 %) rather than operating costs (9 %) of day care

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(1) Linda English, "Day Care Services in Four European Countries", Research Branch, Library of Parliament, 5 Oct. 1982.

(2) Ibid., p. 4.

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centres. Day care centres are more expensive to operate than family day care because of the higher qualifications of centre staff and construction costs, yet they seem to be preferred by government and voluntary groups.

Day care centres have not been enthusiastically supported in West Germany and there is a lack of reliable day care for working parents. In fact, it has been said that facilities for infants and toddlers in Germany are the worst in Europe.(1) Grandmothers have accounted for about 46 % of the care of infants and toddlers since the mid-1970s. Day care centres are associated with public aid, and the state has provided day care only when the family cannot manage. The heaviest users of day care are low-income, immigrant and single-parent families living in large cities.

Free voluntary kindergartens are, however, available for three to six-year-olds in West Germany and are widely used even by children whose parents are not both working for pay. Because of the falling birth rates, spaces have also become available for younger children in kindergartens. A family day care system has been developed by the central government, administered at the state level and funded by both state and local government subsidies, voluntary organizations and parental fees. With little federal government intervention, the day care in Germany varies considerably among states and cities.

In the United States, there is no single federal day care program. Funding for day care services is authorized under a variety of federal laws, including tax credits for day care costs, state-federal matching grants for social services, and special programs for the poor and disadvantaged (i.e. Head Start, Child Care Food Program and Job Training Partnership Act). Licensing and registration requirements vary by state. Recent cuts in federal funding have forced many states to weaken licensing and regulatory requirements and to cut back on licensing staff.(2)

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(1) Harry Schaftner, Women in the Two Germanies, Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 92.

(2) U.S. Congress Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, Families and Child Care, Washington 1984, p. 95 (BrV HV854A35).

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Day care workers in the United States generally receive low wages and few fringe benefits. Two-thirds of centre-based staff and 94 % of family day care providers earn wages below the poverty line.(1) Consequently, the turnover rate among day care centre workers is much higher than other "helping professions".

Increasing numbers of single-parent households and rising rates of married women's participation in the labour force have increased the need for child care facilities in the United States. Long waiting lists exist for infant day care and after-school programs for school-aged children. Centres and family care homes are inadequately regulated and care varies considerably throughout the country and even within regions.

This brief overview of some other countries' day care programs indicates that Canada and the United States have similar approaches to day care. With no federal government policy for facilities, and state/provincial differences in services and regulations, access to day care varies within both countries.

EFFECTS OF DAY CARE ON CHILDREN

Four decades of research are available on the daytime care of preschool children. However, despite the fact that the children of most working parents are cared for by babysitters, the vast majority of the research deals with day care centres. In addition to this, the studies have often been done in university-affiliated centres, or have focused on "deprived" children. Not surprisingly, the results have sometimes been inconsistent and have not always taken into consideration the vast difference in quality of care among day care centres or within parental homes.

Early research on out-of-home care focused on differences in "maternal bonding" between home-reared and centre children. Despite concerns about "maternal deprivation" generated from the work of Rene Spitz and John Bowlby, the separation of young children from their mothers during

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(1) Ibid., p. 96.

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the day was found to cause no impairment on their attachment to their mother. In fact some studies have suggested that day care makes it easier for the child to adjust to unfamiliar circumstances requiring him or her to be at a distance from the mother.(1) The quality of substitute care arrangements is more important than the frequency and duration of separations from the mother for infants. Although there are contradictions in the research, recent findings indicate that day care causes no long-term harm to the attachment between mother and children, particularly when the children experience substitute care in the first two years of life.(2)

Numerous studies have focused on differences between centre and home-reared children in intellectual functioning. Those studies which have found differences reported that the intellectual functioning of day care centre children tends to be improved if they come from poorer family backgrounds. If the child comes from a middle income or more educated home, the differences between centre children and home-reared children are few.

Some studies have also found that day care centre children tend to be more involved in social interaction.(3) This may be seen as positive (i.e. that they are not shy and withdrawn) or negative (that they are more assertive and noisy). Home-reared children are less likely to feel comfortable with strangers and are more likely to be quiet and withdrawn with other children.

Other studies have found that sex roles or distinctions in the behaviour of male and female children tend to be blurred among centre raised children. Apparently mothers are more likely to promote distinct behaviour for their male and female children than day care centre employees. This may be because day care centre employees are likely to be drawn from people with less traditional ideas about male-female behaviour, whereas parents are often afraid of damaging their children by encouraging cross-sex

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(1) J. Survalsky and R. Klein, "Effects of Naturally-recurring Non-traumatic separations from Mother", Infant Mental Health Journal, vol. 1 no. 3 (Fall 1980).

(2) Johnson and McCormick, p 61.

(3) Jay Belsky and Lawrence D. Steinberg, "The Effects of Day Care: A Critical Review", Child Development, vol. 49 (1978), p. 929.

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behaviour. On the other hand, it may simply be caused by attitude differences between working mothers and housewives or the different role models they present to their children.

Most studies emphasize that differences among day care centre, group home care, and maternal home care are confused by a number of other factors which influence the child in care. These include the size of the group at the day centre, the ratio of staff to children, and the personality and training of the centre employees.(1) In addition to these the socioeconomic background of the child will influence how he or she is affected by day care. A number of studies have emphasized the importance of small group size, trained caregivers, and health and sanitation precautions (especially for infants) in group day care. However most studies do not find statistically significant differences between day care centre and home-reared children.(2)

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO DAY CARE NEEDS

Many parents experience difficulty finding adequate day care facilities in Canada. In some areas, formal care is unavailable or too expensive for middle- and lower-income families. Provincial differences in the type of care available, the cost, and the supervision of facilities mean that day care is not uniformly available or of adequate quality. It is not surprising then that only 12 % of children under six whose mothers are in the labour force actually use formal day care.(3)

The solution for mothers who lacked reliable day care was traditionally to opt out of the labour force. Increasingly this "solution" is not viable because of financial need or the desire to maintain a career. Working part-time is now more often used by mothers of young children to

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(1) U.S. Congress Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, p. 11.

(2) U.S. Congress, 1984, p. 10; L. Johnson and N. McCormick, p. 59.

(3) Johnson and McCormick, p. 20.

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solve child care problems. Yet this solution is not without problems as part-time work entails lower hourly wages, job insecurity, lack of seniority and promotional possibilities, and few fringe benefits compared to full-time work. Women who work part-time for long periods of time often end up with low ranking jobs and no pensions. Furthermore, the parent who opts out of the labour force to care for children or who works part-time is invariably the mother. Generally speaking, a major reason for women's lower status in the labour force and their relative poverty as a group relates to their responsibility for rearing children.

Job-sharing could be used as a partial solution to day care if it were accepted more fully by employers. But the person who works at each half of the job would have to receive prorated wages and benefits. Ideally, both men and women would have to share jobs but unfortunately this is unlikely as men and women generally do not work in the same jobs or at similar ranks. If women shared jobs with each other, the lower status of females would be perpetuated in the labour force because their salaries and fringe benefits would be reduced compared to men and childrearing would continue to be seen as "women's work". Similarly, encouraging women to take long maternity leaves to care for their own children would lessen the need for formal day care but reduce women's job experience, pay and/or status.

Despite alternatives to formal day care, the need continues for day care centres and supervised home care. Improving the quality of those services cannot be done without increased funding. If the day care system were part of departments of education (as in France), money could be used from education taxes to upgrade the staff and programs of day care and make use of existing educational facilities and staff. The argument has been made that society benefits from educated and disciplined children. Our children are our major future resource. Asking parents to pay for the care and education of young children is inevitably going to lead to inequalities among families and among regions. Those who can afford high quality care and education will experience few problems. But those who can afford less will suffer.

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Over the past 60 years or more, we have gradually come to see the responsibility for raising and educating children as more than that of the family. Compulsory education was motivated not only by the need for a more educated labour force, but also by problems of potential delinquency, high unemployment, and inequalities between the rich and the poor. Universal access the high quality child care is now more of an issue since over half of married women are in the labour force and employment equality for women is a political priority. Certainly before employment equality is realized, vast improvements need to be made in the availability, quality and cost of child care services in Canada.

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